

college. It requires then no very complex process of reasoning to reach the undoubted conclusion that our numerical growth will always bear a certain ratio to the growth of the college. If by our united efforts the school be supplied with both funds and students, I speak particularly of the theological department, then I am confident we shall witness in the near future a greatly increased growth in the church. The creation of a fund by each State or District Conference from which to loan money, without interest, to deserving theological students might contribute in no small degree to the accomplishment of this same end. By making small yearly payments after graduation the student could replace the loan and thus the fund would be kept intact. Recruits for the ministry are chiefly drawn from that noble class of young men, large of heart but small of purse, who have too much independence to accept a gift even from the church but who might accept a *loan* upon terms which would make its repayment easy, if by doing so they would be enabled the sooner to go forth as preachers of the Gospel. If we would grow we must have preachers—trained preachers,—educated, consecrated young men with heart and soul in the work. We need men equipped with both Gospel and logic who have received not only the will to serve but the ability to serve well, sound of head and heart, sound in the faith. God has given us some such and he is abundantly blessing their work, but we need more.

That grand coterie of earnest conscientious men who championed the Brethren cause when its supporters were few and its perils were great wrought nobly and well, but of those who were prominently identified with the origin of the church not many names are left on the list of active pastors. But few who participated in the work of the Dayton Convention are here to aid us by their counsel in the conference of 1899. Some have gone to join the silent majority and others are incapacitated for active service by the burden of accumulating years. The work of many of the pioneers of the Brethren cause is nearly over and our concern today should be that the mantles of these old church fathers fall upon the shoulders of worthy sons. God send us more preachers ready to catch up the standard when it falls from trembling hands of former leaders and carry it on to new and greater victories. I am sure that the importance of these two matters I have mentioned will not be overlooked. No words of mine were needed to impress you with the evident truth that if we would grow and come to occupy a high place among the churches in influence and numbers we must have spiritual power and a strong ministry. But there is a third element capable of con-

tributing in a large measure to our denominational growth. I mean strict adherence to Gospel creed—practical obedience to the injunction of Jude to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. We shall grow not only because we present to the world an example of godly living, not only because we have a well equipped army of evangelists and pastors, but because we preach the preaching which he bids us and shun not to declare the whole Gospel. The Brethren church will win adherents not because it is richer or more fashionable than any other, nor because it possesses more learning and culture, neither because it can be said that its membership evinces more spirituality and deeper piety than any other, but its superior claims must be urged upon the ground that it is nearer the Gospel both in its doctrine and in its government. In making this claim for the Brethren church I know I am only making a claim for which a member of any other church would make for his own, nevertheless it is an important matter for our numerical increase depends largely upon our ability to substantiate the claim. Unfortunately it is true that many persons connect themselves with some branch of the Christian church without having given any thought to the doctrinal soundness of the faith to which they have subscribed. Denominational bias is with them a matter of inheritance—a legacy transmitted from father to son. The faith of our fathers was precious to them and they were saved by it, but it is of value to us not because they held it but because we have for ourselves examined the foundation upon which that faith rests and tested it by the Word. I may believe that my brother who is a member of some religious denomination whose faith and practices are different from my own will be saved as well as I, but that belief does not entitle me to treat those points of difference as minor matters of faith. To neglect to teach feet washing because we believe that members of some other communion who are conscientious in their rejection of it will be saved without it is to take an unwarranted liberty with the Word and to do so is to invite God's displeasure. Teach the whole Gospel and because it is needful to do so, give emphasis to the distinctive doctrines of the church. There may be "minor points of faith" but let us remember that the importance and binding force of any divine command is not in the intrinsic value of the thing commanded, but that it gets its importance from him who gave the command. When God commanded Moses to build the tabernacle he gave directions so very exact and particular for the construction and furnishing of every part that no room whatever was left for human preference. Tho Moses was a man of sound judgment,

tho he was zealous and wished to honor God, he would have failed of divine approval had he permitted any alterations from the Lord's plan or purposely disregarded the divine will, for God has said, "See thou make all things according to the pattern shown thee in the mountain." The tabernacle was a type of the Christian church. The Lord is the architect, the Master builder of both and in his church, in all matters in which his will has been revealed. There must be no departure from his plan. In all things in which God has given expression to his will there is no room for the exercise of human preference. As preachers of the Word we dare not teach that even the smallest matters are matters of indifference. The church has been rent into factions and sometimes arrayed against itself because men have presumed to change the ordinances of God and make alterations and substitutions in his worship.

So far as God has put into our hands the moulding of the faith and practice of the church, let us make all things according to the apostolic pattern. Let us plead for the exact and literal observance of all God's commandments and as well for the forms of worship, for the rites and ceremonies which he has established in his church. Let us lift up our voices for primitive Christianity, let us search for the sure way—for the old paths. In the church as Jesus instituted it there may be commandments given and forms established which to many people seem unimportant and unnecessary, but it is ours to teach the word just as he has committed it to us. Moses had no right to substitute brass in the construction of the tabernacle where the Lord had said gold was to be used, neither have we the right to set aside or change that which the Lord has established nor to do dishonor to the pure gold of truth by mixing with it the baser alloy of human opinion. We should do and teach even these least commandments not only because the rapidity of our growth depends largely upon our faithfulness in doing so but as a matter of conscience and right and loyalty to him who gave us a complete gospel. And for fear I may be misunderstood I wish to say again that I am advocating a more systematic and persistent teaching of our distinctive doctrines not merely because I think such a course will contribute to our more rapid growth but primarily and chiefly because I am profoundly convinced that the Bible, the Brethren's creed is complete and without redundancy and that therefore we are under the most binding obligations neither to add to nor take from the perfect law of God. I mean that what I have called our *distinctive doctrines*, I believe to be a part of God's perfect law and we should, both in the pulpit and